

Will Byers Almost Gets Murdered by pigwidgeonjr

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Summary:

It's 1984, Jonathan Byers needs cash, so he starts working for four bucks an hour at the local station. It's a boring gig, but Hopper is cool and won't snitch to his mom. When he follows Hopper into the woods late at night out of his own volition, he doesn't expect to come in contact with those that stalk the night. Nor does he expect his brother to get bit by one of them, either.

Will Byers Almost Gets Murdered

Author's Note:

this was born out of me thinking how fucking cool Hopper would be as a vampire hunter, so. take that as you will.

“Does Joyce know about this?”

“Not this job specifically. She thinks I’m interning at the library.”

“It’s not wise to lie to your mom.”

“I know.”

Their voices stayed hush in the squad car, Hopper’s cigarette smoke spilling through the cracked window. Jonathan took a sip of his coffee, making sure it was his. He noticed Hopper pouring some of his flask into his own cup, and it was enough for Jonathan to keep a close eye on Hopper’s driving.

The clock read 12:35 PM, and in a small town like Hawkins, the only criminal activity happening at this time was his brother and friends sneaking into the movies without paying. Jonathan turned the radio up, humming along to the song, tapping his fingers on the dashboard. Blondie was playing.

“I’m telling you, kid,” Hopper interrupted, “nothing interesting happens around here. You’re wasting your time.” Hopper threw his cigarette on the ground with a cough.

“Not really,” Jonathan said, “I’m getting paid.”

“Four bucks an hour isn’t much incentive. You’d be better off at the theater or the diner, or wherever most kids work around here.”

“Maybe I want to be a cop when I’m older.” Jonathan took another sip of his coffee, shrugging his shoulders and avoiding eye contact. It was a lie: most cops were boring and lonely. He didn’t have a real reason, except he thought Hopper was cool. If he were to see a

psychiatrist, they'd probably say that he was looking to fulfill the hole his father left, but he wasn't seeing a psychiatrist so he didn't really care about thinking too deeply into his reason.

"That'd be the biggest mistake of your life."

"I think if you'd take me during the night shift, things would get more interesting."

Hopper started up the car. "These ride-alongs are the most interesting part of my job. It doesn't get any better than this, Byers."

Only working on weekends was either hurting his mom or helping her, and God forbid she'd be honest with him. Will spent most of his time outside with his friends, anyway, but he knew his mom relied on him to be there with Will when she couldn't.

He shut his locker, throwing his backpack on and heading to class. He thought about stopping to see Nancy and maybe apologize, but decided against it, not wanting to confront her when he knew she'd be around her new boyfriend. He avoided her gaze and ignored her calling his name, thankful, for once, for his reluctance to get a haircut; long fringe was suddenly his best friend.

"People have been saying stuff, Nance," he remembers saying.

"And? Ignore them."

"How am I supposed to do that when we can't even go out for dinner without you having to throw in?"

"I told you, Jonathan, I don't mind." She was close to tears.

"I do." So was he.

Two weeks later, Harrington had no problem sweeping in to mend her broken heart. Jonathan was glad Nancy had someone to make her happy, but he wished it wasn't that tool.

Steve Harrington moved to Hawkins only two months before the school year started, fitting right in with the lacrosse team. He said he moved from New York with his parents, and everyone believed him, except for Jonathan, because the dumbass didn't even have a yankee accent.

But, whatever. He didn't care. Nancy could spend her time with whoever. Whatever.

He didn't care.

On days when Will had to stay after school for AV (which was just an excuse for him to hang out with his friends on a school night), Jonathan spent his time in the photography classroom, developing film and looking for any extra canisters. Film was expensive, and sixteen bucks every weekend was going straight towards his college fund.

"The harsh reality of Hawkins, Byers, is that not everyone gets to leave," Hopper told him once, after Jonathan shared his plans of NYU, "and those who do, always end up coming back." He ended his small speech with a grandiose gesture towards himself, spilling his booze spiked coffee on the squad car's carpet, following it with a "shit" and a "hand me that napkin in the glovebox".

Joyce didn't get home until ten or eleven in the evening, leaving the boys to fend for themselves most nights, unless she had premade dinner for them to pop in the microwave before she left for work. Neither of them minded, because it was an excuse for them to pig out on nothing but sugar.

He was nowhere near through with his English essay -- something about Shakespeare -- when he saw the squad car speed past the living room window. Instinctively he stood up before it registered in his head that it was nine on a school night and his brother was eating

Poptarts in the kitchen just a few yards away. He wanted to run out after Hopper, curious as to why he was going so fast when the only thing on the road to chase after were coyotes. It wasn't like Hopper would've given him an answer, anyway, the man was cryptid and dodged questions like his life depended on it.

"You look like you've seen a ghost," Will shouted from the kitchen.

Jonathan laughed, sitting back down. "No, it was just the chief. He was going really fast into the woods."

Will walked over to him, Poptart still in hand, ignoring their mother's rule about eating outside of the kitchen. "What's got him speeding? There's nothing out here."

"That's what I'm thinking."

They were silent, Fonzie making jokes on the TV in the background during a rerun episode. "Let's follow him." Will said, wiping his hand of any crumbs. "What?" Jonathan replied.

"Mom doesn't get home for another two hours, and I'm curious. It's not like you had any plans to finish that essay, either."

Will grabbed the keys and tossed them to his brother, Jonathan barely catching them before they hit the ground.

"I don't know about this, Will. He could be chasing after some druggie, or a murderer."

"There are no murderers in Hawkins, and if he was chasing one, we're not stupid enough to get killed. We just want to see, y'know? We care for the wellbeing of our local police force."
He handed Jonathan his coat, halfway out the door.

Jonathan put it on, locking the door behind him.

It wasn't hard to spot the outline of the black and white squad car in the woods, even with the headlights off. No one was going to arrest him for breaking the law, anyway. They were nearly out of the

county, the “Welcome to Hawkins” sign only a mile away.

He parked the car yards away from where Hopper was, and the two boys watched him go to his trunk, back turned to them.

“It’s weird seeing cops out of uniform, right?” Will whispered, although he had no reason to. “It’s like seeing a teacher in a grocery store.”

Hopper was, like Will observed, out of uniform, in a plaid shirt, jeans, and boots. In Hopper’s defense, it was what every middle aged man in Indiana wore in the 80s, but with a man like him, who eat, slept, and breathed his job, seeing him dressed in civilian clothes was on par with seeing a dog walk on its hind legs.

They watched him get an assortment of items out of his trunk: a sharpened baseball bat, some white stuff on a string they couldn’t identify, a twelve-pack of beer, and a flashlight that he stuffed into his back pocket.

“Maybe he’s hunting coyote?” Jonathan speculated. As soon as the words left his mouth he could already tell that his brother was rolling his eyes.

“Doubt it.”

“W-well, what’s your idea, huh, wise guy?” Jonathan sputtered out, throwing his hands in the air in exasperation.

“Vampires, Jonathan! That’s *garlic*, and probably a wooden stake.”

“First off, vampires aren’t real.”

His words fell on deaf ears as Will tried to open the locked car door, wanting to follow Hopper into the woods. “He’s getting away, Jonathan! We won’t be able to catch up.”

“Will it calm you down if I go after him, see what he’s up to?”

“Only if you let me come along.”

“I’m not letting that happen.” Jonathan grabbed the keys and turned

off the ignition. "Stay here," he said, "I'll be back in a minute."

He unlocked the car and left, zipping up his jacket against the cold. Hopper walked slow, due to a bad leg -- "Bar fight," he had told Jonathan --, so it wasn't hard to keep up with him. He just had to be quiet.

Hopper led him to a clearing, where the remains of a bonfire resided in the middle of it. Jonathan stayed back into closeness of the trees, keeping his breathing silent and careful not to step on anything that could make a noise. He felt like Hopper knew he was there, but chose not to say anything.

Hopper sat on the ground, knees level with his chest. He opened the twelve back of beer and just relaxed, the bat and white stuff -- garlic cloves? -- laid down next to him. It confused Jonathan, and he debated turning around and heading back to the car, simplifying Hopper's journey into the woods to be some weird old man ritual. But behind him, he heard someone walking, the crunch of sticks and leaves loud and obnoxious.

He saw Hopper turn his head to the noise, eyes squinting in the dark. "Byers?" he said, standing up and walking towards him. "What the hell are you doing out here?"

"I, uh, er, I...I came to take a piss." He cringed at his excuse.

"Your bathroom not working?"

He could feel his face turning red as Hopper neared him, wiping his sweaty hands on his jeans and mustering up any ounce of courage he could manage. "N-no, it works. Sometimes you just gotta be a man, right? Piss in the woods?"

"Nice try," Hopper said, clamping his hand down on Jonathan's shoulder and turning him the opposite way. "Go home, Byers. It's late. Dangerous stuff out here."

"Like vampires?"

The voice that spoke was not Jonathan's, but Will's. Jonathan whipped his head around to where his brother stood a few feet

behind him.

“Will,” he hissed, “I told you to stay in the car!”

Hopper removed his hand from Jonathan’s shoulder and ran it through his hair, looking annoyed at the both of them. “Is your mother going to pop out of the woods, too?”

“No,” Will said, quickly, “she’s still at work.”

“Why are you boys here? Did you follow me?”

They didn’t get to answer, a rustle in the trees on the other side of the clearing interrupting the conversation. Hopper turned away, holding his arms out in front of them. “You guys need to head home.” he said. “Or I’ll tell your mom, and --”

He didn’t get to finish his lecture, or whatever he was trying to say, the arrival of a shadowed figure walking out of the other side of the clearing shut all three of them up. The only word uttered from Hopper in the ten second silence that followed was a simple, “Run.” It was all it took for Jonathan to be on his heels, grabbing his brother by the hand as he ran through the woods, dodging trees and leaping over the fallen branches he carefully stepped over before.

Jonathan stopped when he felt his brother fall, the tight grip Will had on his hand dragging him down, too. He recovered after a brief moment, finding Will in the dark. “Are you alright?” he said, looking into his brother’s eyes for any ounce of fear. Will just nodded, standing back up and brushing his jeans off.

“I’m good.”

They stood there for a moment, collecting their breath, until a hard crunch of a tree branch snapped behind them. Will stayed still, only Jonathan daring to turn around in a small bout of bravery. He had a feeling it wasn’t Hopper, and when he was faced with the glowing white eyes of a shadow, he stood there, shaking, that bravery long gone. He reached for Will, feeling his brother’s trembling hand in his own.

He felt paralyzed by time, the darkness, and the raw fear that echoed

throughout his body. The shadow stepped closer, a grin bearing sharp white teeth and the metallic smell of blood radiating off of it frightening him further. In the quickest moment, something neither of them predicted or could've imagined, the shadow launched itself at Will, tackling him to the ground with, what Jonathan assumed, a growl.

Before Jonathan could process what happened, Hopper lunged at the shadow, pulling him off of Will and pointing the sharpened bat at it, keeping the clove of garlic wrapped around his chest tight and secure. Hopper got into a position to strike, but the shadow took off suddenly, blending into the night.

Jonathan was at his brother's side in an instant, as was Hopper, and the both of them picked him up silently, even though Jonathan was burning with questions at the tip of his tongue, and carried him out of the woods, Will's breathing thankfully even, the short distance feeling longer with the heavy weight of uncertainty lingering behind them.

"Your mother's going to be pissed."

Jonathan looked at Hopper, nodded, and headed towards the car.

Author's Note:

sorry if it's anticlimactic, action is #difficult